

NIH Purchase Card Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How soon can a new cardholder expect to receive their purchase card after submitting a cardholder application to the purchase card office?

Cardholders should expect to receive their new purchase cards within 7-10 business days once the purchase card application has been processed by the purchase card office.

2. I need to reassign a cardholder to a different Card Approving Official (CAO). What criteria should be evaluated prior to submitting a CAO change request for the cardholder to the program office?

When reassigning a cardholder to a CAO, the CAO must be an equivalent or higher grade level and acquisition authority than the cardholders under his/her purview. This control helps to ensure separation of duties and proper chain of command.

3. What should I do if a vendor charge sales tax?

The cardholder should tell the vendor that the Federal Government is tax exempt before the purchase is made. If taxes or surcharges are added to a government purchase, the cardholder should ask the merchant to remove the tax or surcharge. The cardholder should provide the merchant with the employer identification number (EIN) or a copy of the state's tax exempt letter <http://www.gsa.gov/>. If the merchant still refuses to remove the tax or surcharge, and the cardholder and CAO are unable to resolve the matter, the cardholder must document in the monthly acquisition file that the attempt was made.

4. I have been notified that a cardholder or CAO is anticipated to be out of the office on leave during the reconciliation deadlines. Should I request a cardholder/CAO proxy or a reconciliation extension? (Extension vs. Proxy)

The dates for reconciliation are as follows: 13th of the month for Cardholders and 18th of the month for Card Approving Officials. If a cardholder or CAO is anticipated to be out of the office during this time and will be unable to meet the deadline, a request for a reconciliation extension to the IC Coordinator may be submitted. Extension requests should only be submitted in cases of emergency or other extenuating circumstances. Failure to reconcile by the deadline or request an extension may lead to account suspension.

5. If a cardholder is leaving (e.g., resignation, retirement, etc.) or no longer needs a purchase card, what needs to be done to cancel the card?

The Purchase Card Help Desk must be notified immediately so that the account can be cancelled. IC Coordinators must instruct the cardholder leaving to complete the following steps:

- Contact any vendors who have not yet billed their account to ensure prompt billing
- Give purchase card to IC Coordinator so purchase card can be destroyed.
- Finalize reconciliation by canceling or matching all open logs. Resolve and reconcile disputes, credits, and transactions. If necessary, a proxy may be assigned.
- Provide files to the CAO or IC Purchase Card Coordinator to ensure they are retained for six years.

6. What happens if I do not have a copy of a packing slip or invoice? What should I do?

The purchase cardholder should contact the vendor to get a copy of the invoice or packing slip. If the cardholder is still unable to get a copy of it, they can dispute with the bank and note on the dispute form that the invoice or packing slip is needed. Also the cardholder should clearly document the file to state the number of attempts to obtain the invoice.

7. How should I properly document receiving information?

When the items are received, record the information (date and signature of the individual receiving the supplies or services) and include with the related purchase transaction documentation.

8. What do I do if my card has been compromised?

If a purchase card is lost or stolen, or there are transactions that the cardholder did not authorize, the cardholder should do the following:

- If a cardholder does not recognize a posted transaction or notices a suspicious charge, the cardholder must notify the bank immediately. In addition, the cardholder must also notify the IC Coordinator that fraudulent transactions have posted to the cardholder's account. In some cases, the cardholder may be sent a Fraud Affidavit from the bank to be completed. If so the affidavit must be completed and returned to the bank within 1-3 business days. A copy must also be sent to the NIH Purchase Card Helpdesk. Failure to

report the fraud in a timely manner may result in the cardholder being held personally liable for the improper charges.

- If convenience checks are associated with a compromised account, the cardholder must request new checks and contact any merchants who have not yet cashed the convenience check so new checks can be reissued to them. A copy of the affidavit if applicable and all correspondence with JPMorgan must be kept in the monthly purchase card file. In NBS, any fraudulent charges that post must be disputed and matched against associating fraud credits that are issued by the bank.
- Promptly respond to any inquiries related to the compromised account from the purchase card office. Carefully review account reconciliation in NBS to ensure that proper fraud credits are received.

9. Can I pay for purchases using a third-party processor such as PayPal or Square?

A cardholder can purchase thru a third party processor only if no other merchant can supply the product or service. The cardholder must document the purchase card file with the name of the vendor, the amount of the transaction and a brief statement as to why this vendor had to be used.